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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 28 September 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you at a historic moment for Palestine and for the long-standing, just cause of the Palestinian people. The application of the State of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations is now before the Security Council, following its submission by President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011.

The submission of Palestine's application for United Nations membership was followed by the historic statement of President Abbas to the General Assembly, in which he conveyed the deep pain and suffering of the Palestinian people, who have endured more than 63 years of dispossession and exile and more than 44 years of foreign military occupation by Israel, which continues to oppress the Palestinian people and to colonize the Palestinian land. Yet, he also conveyed the deep hopes of the Palestinian people for the realization of their inalienable rights, including their rights to self-determination and return, and their legitimate national aspirations for justice and peace in their own independent and sovereign State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, where they can live in freedom and dignity, equal among the community of nations.

President Abbas further reaffirmed the readiness of the Palestinian leadership to engage seriously in peaceful political and diplomatic efforts to achieve the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, including through the resumption of credible, good-faith negotiations on all final status issues based clearly on the long-standing terms of reference of the Middle East Peace Process, namely, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap.

Leaders from all corners of the globe have expressed their support for the efforts of the Palestinian leadership at this critical juncture and, once more, from the podium of the august Assembly, repeatedly reaffirmed support for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and their independent State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. In this regard, it must be stressed that the overwhelming

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majority of leaders also reaffirmed that Israel's ongoing settlement campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal, totally contradictory to the spirit and objective of the peace process, the main obstacle to the two-State solution and a provocative unilateral act that must immediately and fully cease.

Regrettably, however, Israel continues to ignore and belittle the calls of the international community, ignore and breach international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions, and ignore the winds of change throughout the region and the globe, persisting instead with its illegal and destructive settlement campaign and undermining the efforts of all concerned parties to salvage the peace process and resume the negotiations for achievement of the two-State solution.

Israel, the occupying Power, refuses to stop its settlement activities and, in fact, it has intensified its illegal actions in the recent period alongside the escalation of settler terror and violence against the Palestinian people. The latest provocative declaration of further colonization was made yesterday, just days following the statement of the Quartet of 23 September 2011, which aims to revive the negotiations and which, inter alia, recalled previous statements by the Quartet and the basis of a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and called upon the parties to respect their obligations under the Roadmap, which clearly requires a freeze of all Israeli settlement activities.

We strongly condemn the decision by the Israeli Government to approve the construction of yet another 1,100 new units in the illegal settlement of "Gilo" on confiscated Palestinian land in the town of Beit Jala near Bethlehem. Such actions by the occupying Power are indicative of its intransigence and its utter disrespect for international law, United Nations resolutions, agreements reached, international obligations, and the will of the international community. Time and time again, Israel proves through word and deed that it is neither capable nor willing to abandon its expansionist, annexationist agenda in order to seriously engage in peacemaking.

At the same time, due attention must be given to the need for protection of the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian civilians, including children, continue to be subjected to physical attacks and severe harassment and intimidation at the hands of armed Israeli settlers. Palestinian properties also continue to be targeted by violent settler attacks, with yet another mosque vandalized near Nablus and the destruction of more agricultural fields and orchards. In the last month alone, over 173 settler attacks have been documented and over 1,660 trees have been uprooted and destroyed, wreaking havoc on Palestinian lives and the livelihoods of more Palestinian families. Moreover, on Friday, 23 September, a Palestinian man, Issam Kamal Odeh, age 33 years, was killed by the Israeli occupying forces during clashes instigated by settlers, who had once again raided the village of Qusra near Nablus.

Israel's settlers in the West Bank have also been engaged in a vicious campaign of incitement against the Palestinian people. On 25 September it was reported that Israeli settlers hung posters displaying anti-Arab slogans on the main road between Al-Khalil (Hebron) and Occupied East Jerusalem, as well as in other areas. Some of the slogans read: "This is the land of Israel" and "We will slaughter Arabs". In this regard, the constant threats of greater violence and destruction against the Palestinian people by Israeli settlers is a real danger that will further destabilize the volatile situation on the ground and that requires immediate redress

by the occupying Power, which must be held fully accountable for the acts of its settlers, whom it protects and allows to rampage.

The timing and audacity of Israel's recent settlement expansion and the escalation of settler terror can be understood only as the occupying Power's response to the international efforts to resume the peace process, including the efforts of the Quartet. We call on the international community to take a stand for peace and to make abundantly clear to Israel, the occupying Power, that its settlement campaign is illegal and unrecognized and must fully cease, for it is totally incompatible with the two-State solution and, if not ceased, will bring to an end the viability of this solution. It is high time for the international community, including the Security Council, to hold Israel responsible for all such deplorable acts of defiance of the law and for its continuing obstruction of the attainment of peace and security in our region of the world, for which we are all exerting tireless efforts.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 403 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 26 August 2011 (A/ES-10/531-S/2011/541), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations